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LOVELY BERNADETTE PREVAILS IN GRADE III OLD FORESTER MINT JULEP 'CAP

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Saturday, June 9, 2018) – James M. Miller's 4-year-old filly **Lovely Bernadette** ran down **Celestial Insight** in deep stretch to win Saturday's 42nd running of the \$100,000 Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap (GIII) at Churchill Downs by a neck.

Ridden by **Corey Lanerie** and making her first start for veteran trainer **Bernie Flint**, Lovely Bernadette clocked 1 1/16 miles over firm turf in 1:42.36.

Sully's Dream set the early pace and led the field of 10 fillies and mares through solid quarter-mile fractions of :23.36, :46.39 and 1:10.83 as Lovely Bernadette raced near the back of pack and had only one horse beat in the early stages of the race. Lovely Bernadette commenced her winning move midway around the final turn up the rail, weaved her way through traffic at the top of the stretch and grinded out the hard-fought victory in the final 100 yards.

"We were a little far back up the backstretch," Lanerie said. "I thought the horses up front were going pretty fast but I didn't anticipate being that far out of it. When I asked her to go at first she didn't respond right away but when we turned for home she really kicked it into gear."

Lovely Bernadette, who was the 119-pound starting high weight, returned \$7.60, \$4.80 and \$3.60 as the 5-2 second betting choice. Celestial Insight, who carried 118 pounds under **Joe Rocco Jr.**, paid \$8.40 and \$5.20. **Inchargeofme (GB)**, at 118 pounds with **Adam Beschizza** in the irons, finished another 1 1/2 lengths back in third and paid \$6.40.

Sully's Dream, 2-1 favorite **Res Ipsa, Youngest Daughter, Victory to Victory, Inveniam Viam, Ministry** and **Red Dane (ITY)** completed the order of finish. **Dubara (GB)** was scratched.

Lovely Bernadette banked the \$58,900 first prize for her fifth career stakes victory. Recently transferred to Flint after being previously trained by **Jimmy DiVito**, Lovely Bernadette reeled off three consecutive victories to close her 2017 campaign in the Sept. 6 Indiana Grand Stakes, Oct. 20 Valley View (GIII) at Keeneland and Nov. 24 Mrs. Revere (GII) at Churchill Downs.

The Old Forester Mint Julep Handicap victory jumped her earnings to \$568,479 from a record of 8-0-3 from 17 starts.

"She came to our barn after her last start in the Jenny Wiley at Keeneland and has been training great into this race," said Flint, who also won the 2014 renewal of the race with **Honey Hues**. "I knew she'd run a good race and it would just become a jockey's race if we were able to get there. I'm very proud of her effort."

Lovely Bernadette is a daughter of Wilburn out of the Bernstein mare Inlovewithlove and was bred in Kentucky by **David E. Hager II**.

Racing at Churchill Downs resumes Sunday with a 10-race program that begins at 12:45 p.m. EDT. There is a \$439,360 carryover in the Single-6 Jackpot, which covers Races 5-10.

OLD FORESTER MINT JULEP HANDICAP QUOTES

COREY LANERIE, jockey of LOVELY BERNADETTE (winner): “We were a little far back up the backstretch. I thought the horses up front were going pretty fast but I didn’t anticipate being that far out of it. When I asked her to go at first she didn’t respond right away but when we turned for home she really kicked it into gear.”

BERNIE FLINT, trainer of LOVELY BERNADETTE (winner): “She came to our barn after her last start in the Jenny Wiley (GI) at Keeneland and has been training great into this race. I knew she’d run a good race and it would just become a jockey’s race if we were able to get there. I’m very proud of her effort.”

JOE ROCCO Jr., jockey on CELESTIAL INSIGHT (runner-up): “I had a beautiful trip. It couldn’t have worked out better. They went fast (up front) and I was able to sit in the pocket the whole way. My horse was nice and relaxed and when I call on her she took off. It’s been a long time since her last race, so I tried to wait as long as I could. (Trainer) Graham (Motion) does such a great job of getting them ready. She ran hard to the wire; she’s a really game filly. Hopefully she has a big rest of the year ahead of her.”

CHARLIE LOPRESTI, trainer of INCHARGE OF ME (GB) (third): “I wasn’t disappointed. They (the owners) wanted to get a graded placing and we got that done. We got her this year and we’ve run her three times and she won at Keeneland and was second here and they wanted to try this, and I told them I thought this was a good chance to try to get some black type. She ran on at the end, she was coming at the end. She was further back than we wanted her to be, but that’s just the way it unfolded.”

ADAM BESCHIZZA, jockey on INCHARGE OF ME (GB) (third): “I had a perfect trip - she was very unfussed. They went a nice strong gallop (up front) for me and we just worked our way into it. She’s progressing in the right direction, this filly, and she’s now graded (stakes)-placed, so whatever happens the future’s bright for her when she retires, so it’s good to get that locked down.”

Q: Did you think you had a chance to win at any point? “I did, but the winner had marginally more horse than me at the eighth pole and she quickened up nicely by me, but she’s run a gallant race and that’s good for her.”